

61834/P 151

# NEUROLOGY.

AN ACCOUNT OF SOME EXPERIMENTS

## IN CEREBRAL PHYSIOLOGY.

BY DR. BUCHANAN,

*Of Louisville.*

COMMUNICATED TO AN AMERICAN NEWSPAPER, AT DR. BUCHANAN'S  
REQUEST.

BY R. D. OWEN.

London:

J. WATSON, 5, PAUL'S ALLEY, PATERNOSTER ROW

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## NEUROLOGY.

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EXPERIMENTS in physiology of a startling character, such as to all must appear extraordinary, and by many will be deemed incredible, have recently been exhibited, both in public and private, in our little town. These experiments chiefly refer to the vital powers and mental functions of the human subject; and, in an earlier and darker age of the world, would have obtained for their author, Dr. Buchanan, of Louisville, not the character of a bold, original, philosophical naturalist, but rather the reputation of some Paduan necromancer, casting his cabalistic spells over the minds and bodies of his victims.

And, even now, in the nineteenth century, I have hesitated in my intention of addressing, on this subject, a communication to one of the leading journals of your city. The simple statement of what I have seen and heard—and I presume to offer nothing more—will naturally, and almost necessarily be received with distrust.—Men have been so often deceived by the marvellous, that the wise are justly on the watch against easy credulity in marvels. A Genevese philosopher has well said, that “it is easy and agreeable to trust and believe, but to doubt requires an unpleasant effort;” and the history of the human mind and its aberrations, so strikingly illustrates the remark, that none who have read its lessons aright, but will set a strict guard on their imaginations; bearing in mind that credulity is to the full as dangerous and seductive as unbelief.

Yet are there reasonable bounds to scepticism, Galileo wrote to Kepler. “Here, at Padua, is the principal professor of philosophy, whom I have repeatedly and urgently requested to look at the moon and planets through my glass, which he pertinaciously refuses to do.”

This dogged line of opposition—this resolution not to use ones eyes and ears, lest their testimony disturb some pre-conceived idea, or derange some favourite system—is equally at variance with philosophy and inimical to improvement. Nor, in following out scientific researches, should we rashly decide what is too marvellous for belief. Many natural phenomena, which would have seemed to our ancestors nothing short of the cabala of the black art, are in our day, familiar and acknowledged; and the only wonder in regard to them now is, not that they have been discovered at last, but that they have been hidden from the world so long.

Phrenology was long denied a rank among the sciences; yet it

is now commonly conceded that its outlines, at least, are true and demonstrable.—It is generally admitted, that to a certain portion of the brain may be referred the intellectual faculties ; to another, the moral sentiments ; and again to another, the animal impulses. And if there be just cause for doubting the accuracy of the minuter subdivisions, this would prove, not that Gall and Spurzheim were empirics, but only that their science is yet imperfect ; as a science of origin so recent may well be supposed to be.

The most valid objection which has been urged against the claim of phrenology to a place among the exact sciences, is the fact, that the observations on character, for which it depends to demonstrate the functions of a particular organ, are of a very general nature ; and even in their aggregation, are necessarily contingent and inferential, rather than absolute demonstrative. It is to obviate this objection, that Dr. Buchanan's researches have been, for years past, chiefly directed.

It occurred to him, that if the different portions or organs of the brain could be excited, so as to manifest, on the instant, and in a striking manner, their peculiar functions, then, what was before only inference and probability, might become certainty and demonstration.

Following up this idea, Dr. Buchanan arrived, by actual experiment, at various results which bid fair to solve at last the great problem that has divided the scientific world, ever since the days of Hippocrates and his "animal spirits," down through the disquisitions of Des Cartes, to the present day ; when some physicians (Abernethy, I believe, among the rest), appear inclined to recognize a subtile fluid analogous to electricity as the prime agent in sensation. Some such subtile agent, for which Dr. Buchanan has retained, as most appropriate, the name of "nervous fluid," appears, according to Dr. B.'s discoveries, to pass, by contact, or through the medium of a metallic or other conductor, from one person to another. Experiment further proves, that some temperaments are more capable of receiving its impressions, others of communicating them. Dr. B. found the liability to excitement, as he phrases it, the *impressibility*, in some persons so feeble, that hardly any effect could, by ordinary means, be produced ; while in others, usually of a nervous temperament, the effects were so powerful, that great care was necessary in conducting his experiments.

The general result has been, to establish the accuracy of a great portion of the system of Gall and Spurzheim. Some organs, however, it would seem, have been misplaced ; of others the functions have been partially misunderstood ; and many have been wholly omitted. Those, for example, that appear to control the vital functions and the external senses, have been overlooked by phrenologists. They have not imagined, that the sight could be invigorated or weakened, that peristaltic action could be accelerated or arrested, that the pulse could be quickened or retarded, that the muscular energy could be increased or diminished, by exciting particular portions of the brain. Yet these results



Dr. Buchanan has obtained, by simple contact of the hands, placed on the head or face.

The number of those whose brains are thus easily excited, he found to be comparatively small; yet in every society of a few hundred persons, he has been able to meet with some impressible subjects. They may usually be thus detected. Let the operator grasp firmly in his hand any metallic conductor, a bar of steel for example, and the subject receive it loosely in his hand, placed at rest, and remaining without muscular effort; if a benumbing, tingling, sometimes painful sensation, occasionally accompanied by a feeling of heat, be experienced in the arm, often running up to the shoulder, the subject is commonly impressible.

Dr. Buchanan has found several such among us. The most easily impressed was a young man, T—— C——, about nineteen, of a quick, excitable temperament, but in good health. I have known him from his infancy. He is of one of the most respectable families in this place, originally from Virginia, once neighbours of Thomas Jefferson, with whom T——'s father was well acquainted. He himself is of quick parts, good common education, and irreproachable character. The idea of simulation or wilful deception on his part (even had the experiments been of a nature to permit the possibility of such arts) is among us who know him, out of the question. But the character of many of the effects produced was, even to a dispassionate stranger, such as to stamp conviction of their reality.

Dr. Buchanan, whose mild, unassuming manner and amiable deportment have gained for him many friends during his short visit here, expressed to me a wish that some of these experiments should be faithfully chronicled. I undertook the task, partly from personal regard for himself, and partly from a sense of duty. And I now offer them for insertion in the columns of a journal, of which I highly estimate the spirit and temper, in the hope that they may not be without interest to its readers.

The first experiments were made in public; and the operator wrote on a black board placed behind the subject, the faculty or emotion which he proposed to excite.

The results produced were, for a time, chiefly of a pathognomic character, indicated by sudden change of countenance, gesture and attitude.—These were striking and unequivocal.

The organs giving playfulness and good humour, were excited; and the subject, who had seemed somewhat embarrassed by the novelty of his situation, bent forward, smiled, his arms relaxed, his embarrassment was gone, and his whole air was that of ease and mirthful sympathy. The effect was infectious; and the audience indulged in laughter, in which, with much apparent zest, he himself joined. Suddenly the operator raised his hand, and placed it on the organ of self-esteem. An enchanter's wand could not have produced a transformation more sudden and complete. Every expression of mirth or playfulness vanished at the touch; the body was thrown back even beyond the perpendicular; the chin elevated; the legs crossed consequentially; the

relaxed arms drawn up, one hand placed on the breast, the other a-kimbo; and a sidelong glance of the most supercilious contempt, cast on the audience, convulsed them with laughter. The subject of their mirth, however, remained utterly unmoved; not a muscle of the face relaxed; and the expression of proud scorn seemed to harden on his countenance. To the questions of the operator, he either disdained to answer, or replied in the brief language of self-sufficient impatience. "What do you think of the audience?" A look more expressive than words was the only reply. The question was repeated, and at last he said: "They look very mean." Dr. B.—"What are they laughing at?" T.—"That is nothing to me."

His attitude was so theatrical, that some one (knowing that his memory was very retentive, and that he was fond of dramatic reading), suggested that he should recite something. "Will you recite something for the audience?" "No, I don't care to do it." "Perhaps you don't know anything by heart?" "I could, if I would." The organs of memory, language, and imitation being excited, and it having been suggested to him that he should select something from the play of Damon and Pythias, at last he rose, and with a tone, and look, and gesture, that Kean himself might have envied—such scornful and withering contempt did they express—he recited the passage commencing:

"Are all content? A nation's rights betrayed,  
And all content? Oh slaves! oh paricides!  
Oh, by the best hopes that a just man has,  
I blush to look around, and call ye men."

T. told me afterwards, that before the play of Damon and Pythias was named, he was about to choose a passage, of somewhat similar character, from Coriolanus; for that just suited the frame of mind into which he had been cast.

After the recitation, he remained standing in the loftiest attitude of sarcastic scorn, and could hardly be persuaded to sit down. The chair seemed too small for his greatness. At last the operator touched the antagonistic organs: and look, tone, manner, gesture—all changed again on the instant, so as to imitate humble, almost childish good-humour.

Experiments of a different character succeeded. On trial it was found that T—— could sustain in a natural state, horizontally at arm's length, fifteen pounds on the right hand. By acting through a portion of the brain, on the muscular system, Dr. B. increased his power to twenty or twenty-one pounds; and then, reversing the excitement, he diminished it, until T— was unable to sustain eight pounds. A similar experiment was made as successfully, on the left hand.

Another experiment was very amusing. After writing on the board "Hunger," Dr. B. excited what he calls the organ of *Alimentiveness*. T— looked uneasily around, "What do you want?" "Nothing." "How do you feel?" "I'm very hungry." "Would you like something to eat?" (Very eagerly), "Yes,



that I would." "I've sent for something to eat." "Have you?" and T.'s gaze became instantly riveted on the outer door of the lecture room. Shortly after the messenger returned with something in a napkin. T.'s eyes followed him as he advanced to the platform, with such eager intentness as excited shouts of laughter in the audience. The napkin contained some cold, stale, corn bread, which Dr. B. had requested should, if possible, be procured. "Will you have it?" said the Dr. "Yes, yes, give it me." And T—snatched at it with the eagerness of a famished animal, rather than a human being; and literally devoured it with such ravenous rapidity, that the audience were in serious alarm lest he should be choked on the spot.

The organ regulating the nerves of sensation was then excited; he shrunk from the slightest touch; and when Dr. B. proposed to pluck a single hair from his head, obstinately resisted the proposition. The antagonist organ was then touched, and he plucked out his own hair with such careless indifference, that Dr. B. had to arrest his hand. The Doctor was proceeding to prick his hand with a pin, when T—'s brother, one of the audience, who had been greatly excited by what he had just seen, rose and protested against the experiment being further continued. Dr. B. assured him his brother should not be hurt; and on trial it appeared, that with his eyes shut, he could not detect the prick of the pin on his hand at all.

Space permits not that I should detail the various experiments that succeeded. Suffice it to say, that the organs of fear, of firmness, of veneration, of benevolence, of doubt, of credulity, and many others, were excited; and all gave manifestations of a more or less striking character.

The private experiments took place in the presence of a small circle of friends, among whom were two members of the medical profession, residing here.

Previously to commencing these, Dr. B. informed us, that as his intention was to show the absolute control which he could exert over the constitution of T— C—, he would endeavour to produce any effect which, in writing, he might be requested to do. The experiments which followed therefore, were either the result of a request expressed in writing by one of the party, or else the Dr. passed around a paper stating explicitly the effect he purposed to produce.

As Dr. B. had informed me, that he had already, in some instances, produced actual theft, and believed he could do so in the case of T— C—, I asked him (in private, before T— arrived) to make the attempt. He requested me to arrange some tempting articles of jewelry on the table, half concealed by a newspaper. I placed a gold pencil and a signet ring, in accordance with his request, and the chair destined for T— was then set so that they were within easy reach. The subject of this strange experiment had scarcely taken his seat, when, at the touch of the Dr.'s. fingers, his countenance fell, his head sank on his bosom, and he cast furtive and uneasy glances around. "How

do you feel, T——?” said the Dr. “Mean enough,” was the reply, in a tone that corresponded well with the words. The Dr. then increased the excitement; and the first effect discerned, was a clutching motion of the hands. The Dr. changed the position of his chair, so that his eyes fell on the pencil and seal. His hands seemed almost instinctively to approach them, but he drew back several times, as if in fear of detection. Those present then began to converse on indifferent subjects, as if not noticing him. After a few minutes of restless uneasiness, gradually leaning over the table, he cautiously and dexterously conveyed both pencil and seal to his pocket handkerchief, which he had laid on his knee, and hastily wrapped them up in it; his countenance the while exhibiting a strange mixture of fear and eagerness: it was the very personation of petty thievery. Dr. B. then approached him. “Have you a pencil, T——?” said he. T—— replied, gruffly, without raising his head, “No.” “Why, I saw one here but this moment, what could have become of it? Can’t you tell me?” “No, how should I know?” “You must certainly have taken it.” “I didn’t; I never saw it.” “Have you really no pencil, then?” As Dr. B. asked this question he touched some honest organs, and T——, raising his head, for the first time abashed and mortified, gave up the articles he had taken.

I asked T—— afterwards, what his sensations were, during this experiment. “They were some of the most disagreeable,” said he, “I ever experienced: a sentiment of fear, overruled by a craving desire of possession; I dare say just as a thief really feels.” “You thought the pencil very pretty,” said I, smiling. “Pretty!” said he, “I thought I had never seen anything so beautiful in my life. I felt as if I could go without food for a week, to get it into my hands.”

During a subsequent experiment, when the organ of calculation had been excited, and T—— was telling over and over again, with amusing eagerness, some small change which had been placed in his hands, Dr. B. standing behind T——, and signed to us to observe the effect, slowly applied his fingers to the organs of acquisitiveness and secretiveness. The action of reckoning was immediately arrested; the fingers closed over the money; a part was conveyed to his handkerchief; and when urged to give up the rest, he first equivocated about the amount, and finally declared, that it was his, any how, he would never give it up. In this he persisted, until a touch on the organ of conscientiousness quickly reversed his intentions.

A subsequent experiment was of a still more startling character. Dr. B. having informed us, in writing, that he would attempt to change T——’s mind to the condition of early infancy, proceeded to operate on certain organs. T——’s head dropped on one side; he appeared hardly conscious of anything that was passing around; and with a silly laugh, (which in an adult seemed almost idiotic) he held up his hands, opened and closed the fingers, and appeared to examine them with much delight. There was a complete relaxation of the muscular system. His



arm dropped over the chair, and stooping down, he seemed listlessly to trace and admire the bright figures on the carpet. At last, getting on the floor, he caught up, with great glee, a bunch of keys that were thrown to him, seized upon an impromptu doll that was placed in his way, crawled about without apparent object, and in short, exhibited every symptom of a relapse into a state of infancy. When restored, by the action of the operator's hands, he appeared to awake, almost from a trance; did not recollect what he had been doing, and could not imagine how he got from his chair to the floor.

An experiment succeeded, which it was frightful to witness. By passing his fingers in a peculiar manner, backwards and forwards, along the medium line of the *sinciput*, corresponding with the upper fissure of the hemispheres of the brain, the effect appeared to be, to destroy all sense of identity; to scatter the thoughts, so that they could not be concentrated on any subject; and to cause the legs and arms to be extended in opposite directions, violently and involuntarily. The patient sometimes moved his head and body to one side, then to the other; seemed excessively restless and uneasy; his eyes rolled frightfully in their sockets; and his countenance indicated utter confusion of ideas, and vague apprehension, almost amounting to horror.—When requested to strike his hands together, he made the effort unavailingly; when asked to rise from his chair, it appeared he was unable to do so; and when assisted to his feet, his legs spread out laterally in so unnatural a manner that he could not walk; and, being afraid he would injure himself, we replaced him on his chair. He did not reply rationally to any of the questions put to him.

When restored to his senses, after this experiment, it was some little time before his mind regained its equilibrium. He complained of the effects produced as painful, though his recollection of them seemed vague. He said he felt as if his consciousness was dissevered; and (as he phrased it) “as if one part of his head was thinking one way, and one another.” He added, that he experienced an impulse to go in different directions at the same time.

There were other experiments of a less painful character, that produced very remarkable results. Dr. B. requested T— to read from a work placed before him. He began in his usual tone of voice. As he proceeded, Dr. B., by exciting certain portions of the brain, strengthened his voice, rendering it full and sonorous; and then, by counteraction, muffled its tones, (as are those of the piano, by employing a soft pedal,) so that he appeared to read with effort, and in a half whispered voice, that was scarcely audible across the room. This was repeated again and again, so that the reader was arrested in the middle of a sentence; and, whenever the voice was weakened, it required some urging to induce T— to continue the exertion of reading at all.

A pleasing experiment on the voice was the following :—Dr. B. requested to be furnished with some poetry of a simply pathetic character. The piece commencing



“Pity the sorrows of a poor old man,”

was selected. Under the excitement of the organs of sympathy and compassion, T— repeated the first four lines with a tone and manner so true to nature, and so replete with genuine pathos, that those present were affected almost to tears. The last line especially,

“Oh, give relief, and heaven will bless thy store.”

was delivered so touchingly, the hands clasped, the eyes raised to heaven, the accent that of imploring entreaty, that every one looked at his neighbour in silent admiration. Dr. B. then begged that T— would repeat the lines once more. The first three were given with the same eloquent feeling as formerly; but as T— concluded the third line, Dr. B. changed his fingers to some of the harsher organs; and, as if by magic, the countenance hardened; the eyes lost their mild lustre; the hands dropped and were clenched; and the concluding entreaty blurted forth in a gruff tone of surly impatience, so utterly at variance with the words and with the manner in which the commencement of the stanza had been recited, that the effect was irresistibly ludicrous.

Further experiments went to establish the fact, that the upper organs of the head have an influence in raising the pitch of the voice, the basilar organs in lowering it.

Several experiments were made touching the influence that may be exerted on the respiratory functions. Inspiration and expiration were produced and arrested, at the touch of the operator. At his will, respiration was hurried to that of fever, or retarded till it resembled a succession of sighs.

Experiments made while Dr. M. of our town held his finger on the pulse, showed that by excitement of different portions of the brain, almost any description of pulse could be produced;—hard, wiry, full, soft, quick or slow. At one time the pulsations of the heart were so much reduced, as to be hardly perceptible to the hand; at another, the pulse bounded, as under the influence of sudden passion; and again at another, it indicated violent febrile action, in several of its stages.

An attempt to act on the organ of taste, so as to enable T— to distinguish different substances moistened and applied to the tips of his fingers, was not successful in his case. An effect was indeed produced in his salivary glands, but no precise taste could be distinguished.

In the case of Miss L. M. however, who was accidentally discovered to be impressible, this experiment fully succeeded. She distinguished in succession, ground coffee, cayenne pepper, salt, sugar, &c. But I observed that it was necessary to allow some time to elapse between each trial, as the taste of the first substance appeared to linger, so as to render her perception of taste less quickly discriminating, after the first test.

I have omitted to mention that several experiments were made

on T. C. in the presence of the two medical gentlemen above referred to, by acting alternately on the organs of calorification and coolness. A thermometer was introduced into his mouth, which showed the temperature to be ninety-eight. In one minute and fifteen seconds it was reduced to ninety-two; in one minute and thirty-five seconds more, it was raised to ninety-eight; in two minutes and a half more to between ninety-nine and a hundred; and again in one minute and forty seconds from that time, it was sunk to ninety-one; when it was found necessary to discontinue the experiments, as the patient's teeth began to chatter, and he was unable to retain the thermometer longer in his mouth.

The organs of physical coolness and of fear are neighbours, and seem to be allied, so that in exciting the one, the other usually becomes active. It would seem that the common expression, "his teeth chattered for very fear," is physiologically accurate.

This last experiment is, perhaps, to a scientific man, the most satisfactory of all. Imagination may fairly enough be supposed to have its influence, in modifying some of the results which I have previously detailed; but the thermometer cannot lie.

It is an interesting fact connected with these experiments, that galvanism produces an effect in exciting the organs of the brain, similar to that of the nervous fluid, but more irritating in its action.—The wires of a galvanic battery, (armed with a small sponge to deaden the shock,) were applied to T's head; but the excitement created was so great, and so difficult of government, that it was deemed expedient to discontinue the experiment. It ought here to be mentioned, that T. is peculiarly susceptible to galvanic influences. A galvanic circle formed simply by applying a plate of zinc three inches square above one hand, and a plate of copper of the same size below it, instantly produced involuntary twitchings in the hand, extending up the arm to the shoulder. A similar circle established through the tongue, was intolerable. T. is also very strongly affected by an electric shock.

An attempt to identify the galvanic and nervous fluids, by causing the latter to deflect the needle of an estatic galvanometer, proved unsuccessful; but it is to be remembered that the galvanometer, was not of so very delicate a construction, as, for a perfectly satisfactory experiment, it ought to have been.

A series of experiments made in Dr. O's laboratory, relative to the capabilities of different bodies to conduct the nervous fluid, furnishes the following general results.

Of upwards of one hundred inorganic bodies, all were more or less capable of transmitting the nervous influence; but of these, metals and metallic ores were the best conductors. Of inorganic bodies, muscular tissue conducted best, and with more rapidity than muscles; whilst horn, bone, whalebone, tortoise-shell, bees'-wax, feathers and silk, but especially hair, appeared to be non-conductors. Perhaps, on that account, hair is the most suitable covering for the head—the central region of nervous action.

It appeared also, that the conducting powers of substances



augmented with their volume; and diminished as the distance was increased through which the nervous fluid had to be communicated.

A very distinct impression, however, was transmitted, a distance of forty feet along an iron wire, one sixth of an inch in diameter.

I will not add to this sketch, which, brief and imperfect, and desultory as it is, has extended far beyond the limits I originally prescribed to myself, by any lengthened comments. It behoves us first, by repeated experiments, to see established to the satisfaction of the public mind, the actual existence of phenomena so novel and so startling as those I have just described, before we go in search of the thousand results and deductions, physical, moral, social, medical, and the ten thousand corollaries therefrom, which, even at the first rise of the curtain upon such a scene of wonders, throng confusedly on our minds.

Nor, except for a brief season, can doubts remain as to the reality, or the non-existence, of the phenomena here detailed. Dr. Buchanan is about to visit the Atlantic cities. His pretensions will pass through the fiery ordeal which science and talent are sure to prepare for them. They will quickly be exploded and cast to oblivion, among the thousand day-dreams that have amused all ages of the world, or, they will be recorded on the page of science, as one of the most luminous in all her splendid volume; and the discovery of Buchanan will hereafter rank, not with those of Gall and Spurzheim alone, but hardly second to that of any philosopher or philanthropist, who ever devoted his life to the cause of science and the benefit of the human race.

ROBERT DALE OWEN.

New Harmony Indiana.—June, 1842.

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## NEW HARMONY.

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A pamphlet has been sent us (New York Beacon) by post, just published, by R. Dale Owen, being a letter addressed to the Rev. B. Halsted, apparently a young Episcopalian minister, recently resident at New Harmony, under the patronage of Mr. Maclure, brother to the late philosopher and philanthropist of that name, and half owner of New Harmony, himself the existing brother, apparently an amiable man, an Episcopalian, and a whig; and therefore, while apparently friendly to the Owen family, publicly opposed to their influence, except on points of indifference.

The letter has been written in reply to an anonymous vilification of New Harmony, and the Owen family, published in



the Philadelphia Episcopalian Recorder, enclosed to that paper by the Rev. B. Halsted.

Mr. Robert D. Owen first attacks the character of the writer, whom he assumes to know, accusing him of the very faults he charges on Harmony; he then proceeds thus:

“The first assertion is, that the members of the Working Men’s Institute are sons of Belial, determined enemies of religion, ungrateful and bigoted; and the proof brought is, that on a certain occasion the Trustees of the Society refused to you the use of a room in which they are wont to meet. I am not a member of that Society, and know of its business proceedings only by hearsay. Its Trustees allege, that it was from no enmity to religion, nor bigotry, that they made difficulties on that occasion; but simply because they required the room for their own purposes. Is it charitable—is it doing as we would be done by—to presume, at once, that this is a “pitiful excuse”—a wilful falsehood? The law holds every man innocent, until he is proved guilty. Shall we be less just and charitable than the law? Shall we disobey the command, “Judge not that ye be not judged;” and, arrogating to ourselves rights which appertain to the Searcher of Hearts alone, sit in judgment on men’s consciences and decide their secret motives? The Trustees disclaim the motives imputed to them. Are we to reject their disclaimer and pronounce them bigots and ingrates?—a slender and presumptuous foundation, on which to ground so harsh and weighty a charge!

The next assertion is, that our family, though we did not appear in this matter, might have prevented it. So far as I am concerned, my reply is, that I had neither opportunity nor excuse for interfering. I knew nothing of the decision until it was made; and when I heard of it, I expressed my regret, that it had been considered necessary to make it.

But if the accusation means that, as a general rule, our family have intolerantly put difficulties in the way of ministers of the gospel, who desired to preach in New Harmony, then the members of your own church will bear me witness, that it is not true.

They will inform you, that myself and brothers have, like my friend Mr. A. Maclure, uniformly given the free use of any public building belonging to us, for public worship, whenever application was made to that effect. I repeat it, this has been our uniform, continued practice for years, without a single exception. Bishop Kemper, of your church, availed himself of it. Is there fairness—is there common justice—in accusing us now of intolerant bigotry, because, while willing that our own buildings should be used for such a purpose, we did not also insist that others, over whom we had no control whatsoever, should, right or wrong, follow our example?

The next charge regards the depravity of this town, and the influence of our family in producing that depravity. The only particular sins which even your correspondent’s assurance ventures to array against New Harmony are, intemperance, card-

playing, Sabbath-breaking and frequenting of balls and the theatre.

First: Intemperance. There are two groceries in the town; of which one, for lack of custom, is, I understand, about to be shut up. I admit that this is two too many; and for one, I stand ready to aid in reforming the evil, so soon as a rational and practicable mode of doing so can be pointed out. In the mean time, I ask you to remark, that Harmony is certainly not worse—and I think I may say considerably better—in this respect, than the average of Western towns. There is doubtless room for reform; all I except to, is that a man, himself the worst sinner, should cast stones, without mercy or measure, at his far less guilty neighbours.

Second: Card-playing. If this means playing for money, it is a vice now hardly known, if I am correctly informed, in the place. If it extends to cases where a party of old ladies may have sat down to a rubber of whist, to while away an idle hour, then I think *depravity* is a somewhat harsh term to apply. Doubtless time may be more profitably spent than in playing cards, even for mere amusement; yet how often is it spent, far less innocently, in scandal and backbiting, without rebuke or comment from those who would be terribly shocked at the sight of the ace of spades! Your correspondent's abuse of our town, is, in point of fact, a far more culpable act, than twenty years' card-playing.

Third: Frequenting balls. We have had balls once a week through the winter. They are conducted with order, decorum and simplicity, cost a trifle, are usually closed at half-past ten, and, so far as I know or believe, injure the morals or habits of no one. They form a place of friendly re-union, where the old as well as the young meet for an evening's relaxation.—The immoral tendency of this amusement, when properly regulated, is,—permit me to remind you,—a matter of opinion. It was the pious FENELON, who, in reply to a remark from one of his brother clergymen, said: "My friend, you and I need not dance; but let us leave these young people to enjoy themselves." I was bred among the strict Presbyterians of Scotland; among whom, even to walk out on a Sunday, except to church, was looked upon as sinful.—Yet our minister, one of the most rigid of his class, honored the Annual County Ball with his presence, and his daughters were the best dancers in the parish. In the face of conflicting opinions on this subject, it does not seem just to tax our citizens with depravity, because many of them look upon dancing as an innocent recreation, and frequent our balls accordingly.

So it is, also, with regard to the amusements of the theatre. Many among the professing Episcopalians of England frequent Drury Lane and Covent Garden, without scruple, or rebuke from their pastors. That the theatre, whatever may be its capabilities as a means of instruction and improvement, does, in fact, as it is usually conducted, produce more harm than good, I am not disposed to question. But it is the less necessary to pursue the subject: as, of late years, theatrical amusements have become



rare among us; but one having taken place, as I think, since you settled in our town.

And lastly, Sabbath-breaking. On this point, too, there are various opinions. Some of our citizens think it no offence against God or man, occasionally to work in their gardens, or otherwise occupy themselves in some useful pursuit during a portion of the first day of the week.—But no one, so far as I know, interrupts or disturbs those who choose to employ the day differently. Each follows the dictates of his own conscience, and interferes not with that of his neighbour. I am aware, sir, that this is not in accordance with your own opinions; but yet I will ask you whether it is charitable to charge with depravity those who honestly differ from you on this point?

Next in order comes the charge, that the influence of our family has entailed this depravity on the town.

You and I, sir, are but partially acquainted with each other. I should have given you a general invitation to my residence, whenever your leisure was not more pleasantly occupied, had I believed that the invitation would be agreeable to you, and would be received without misconstruction. As it is, you must, I should imagine, know something of my habits and demeanour and that of my brothers; seeing that it is some sixteen years since we first settled in this place. If you do, I ask you, sir, in plain, direct terms, if our habits are those of profligacy, in any single respect whatever? If you cannot answer that question, what is the justification for the heavy charge you have endorsed? No man of sense or modesty chooses to speak of his own merits, except in reply to a direct accusation, responsibly endorsed. Such an accusation is endorsed by you. I meet it in the face; and I speak in the presence, and under the correction, of hundreds who have known me for half a life-time. I say then—since I must speak for myself—that I never was, even for an instant, intoxicated, during my life. I say, that I never gambled; no, not for one single evening; nor ever made a bet of a dollar, at cards or any other game. I say, that I have not half a dozen times, in as many years touched a card at all.—I say, that I am not, nor ever have been, guilty of profane swearing, or any unseemly language whatsoever. And, since your correspondent must needs taunt me as the author of a book\*, which his grossness cannot appreciate, I add, that I never, since the day of my birth, crossed the threshold of a house of ill fame. Let it not offend you, sir, when I say, that let your own habits and principles in each and every one of these respects be what they may, they are not better, or stricter, than my own. And what I here say for myself, I may say, so far as I know or believe, of my brothers also.

In all this, do I vaunt myself, vain-gloriously? Far from it, sir. St. Paul asks us: “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” Now, if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it? To my father, ROBERT OWEN—the

\* Moral Philosophy.



same who comes in for a full share of your correspondent's abuse—to his careful training and excellent example—do his children owe their habits, such as they are. If these compare favourably with the usual habits of the world, I claim no merit, I demand no praise. But this I do claim, that it shall not be said, that our influence depraves the town.—This I do ask, that when a clergyman residing in New Harmony endorses such a charge, he shall set forth and lay before the world, in open daylight, the grounds for that endorsement.

On every fitting occasion, when a wish to that effect was expressed by my fellow citizens, I have delivered lectures for their benefit, on subjects political, literary, historical, scientific. Is that exerting an immoral influence? For ten years past I have not delivered even a single lecture on religion. But if I had, is it not what you yourself do every Sunday? Have you a right to your opinions, and I not mine? Are mine less honest than yours? If I were so disposed to be a time-server, a hypocrite, a seeker of easily-earned popularity, is not the wide gate and the broad way of orthodoxy open before me? Who does not gain, in a mere worldly point of view, by treading it? Then reflect, sir, whether you do not owe—I say not *toleration*, but *respect*—forbearance and decent respect—to the conscientious scruples of those, who do not take the same road to heaven as yourself.

But you have to accuse me, perhaps, of lecturing on literary and historical subjects, or of following some other worldly avocation on Sundays. So be it. I have done so, in so far as I could without disturbing or annoying others. I do not consider that an offence nor an evil habit. Whenever I am convinced that it is, I shall abandon it. In the mean time, you are no more bound to attend my lectures than I yours. If your lectures produce more good effect than mine, no one will rejoice thereat more than myself.

I must hasten to a conclusion. Your correspondent's next charge is a tangible one. It is that, while under Rapp's community, New Harmony was the abode of neatness, order, industry, and decorum; now it presents a scene of distilleries, grog-shops, dirty streets, and dilapidated buildings.

You have doubtless, sir, travelled throughout this western country, and seen many of its towns and villages. Then, as a gentleman, I ask you to declare, whether nine out of every ten—whether nineteen out of every twenty—of these are not less neat, less cleanly, less tastefully adorned by gardens and otherwise, less decorous and attractive in their entire appearance, than is this same vilified town of New Harmony at this very moment. In regard to grog-shops I have already spoken. As for distilleries, there is one less within the limits of the town, than when Rapp owned it; there were two then, there is but one now. And, for dilapidated buildings, I pray you, sir, to point me to one single example, except a portion of the Hall alone; and that Mr. MACLURE, its proprietor, has liberally offered to repair, at his own

expense, if the citizens can put it to any permanent useful purpose. On its east wing he has expended some couple of thousand dollars already.

What are we to think, sir, of accusations like these, which the first glance of every passing stranger can disprove? Is it strange if they should irritate? Is it marvellous if we should ask ourselves, with what motive such *could* be indited or circulated, except to prejudice against us those who will never visit our town, nor ever perhaps read our reply?

But I have not yet done with this matter. It was known to your correspondent, though probably not to yourself, that some nine years ago, when I returned from New York, after an absence of three or four years, and when our family took up their residence within the town, New Harmony did exhibit signs of dilapidation and neglect. It is known to him that, since that time, it has been daily, and monthly, and yearly improving in neatness, order, and rural beauty. Far be from me the presumption to attribute all this change to our presence. Our family has been but one among many to aid in bringing it about. But since all the evil which can be conjured up against Harmony must needs be visited upon us as the result of our influence, is it fair to deny to us our share in producing the good?

I must bring this communication, already too long, to a close. It is written in no unfriendly spirit towards yourself. I trust it will be received in no unfriendly spirit by you. We, who do not entertain the religious doctrines of your sect, cannot conscientiously aid you in their dissemination. But though your correspondent has impugned our motives, we do not in return impugn yours. Have we, up to this moment, ever done so? You, on your side, owe to us a candid interpretation of our motives, and a scrupulous abstaining from misrepresenting our actions. You believe us to be in error. We believe the same of you. Let each, then, learn from GAMALIEL, when he said—"If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it."

And there *is* common ground on which we can meet. You are opposed to intemperance, to gambling, to idle dissipation, to profligacy? So are we. You desire to see these eradicated from New Harmony? So do we. In these things we agree; in others let us agree to differ. But let us not, on either side, resort to abuse, to vilification. Let us not bring against each other a railing accusation. That is contrary to the spirit of our principles, and to the precepts of your religion. It must, if persisted in, bring among us not peace but a sword. Let the first error, then, in this matter be the last; and the object which has caused the penning of this communication, will be fully attained.

I am, Sir, your well-wisher,

New Harmony, April 12, 1842.

ROBERT DALE OWEN.